

THE
TRIBUNALL
OF THE
CONSCIENCE:

OR,
A TREATISE OF
EXAMINATION;

SHEWING
Why and how a Christian should
examine his Conscience, and take
an account of his life.

BY
HENRY MASON, Parson of St. Andrews
Underhaft, London.



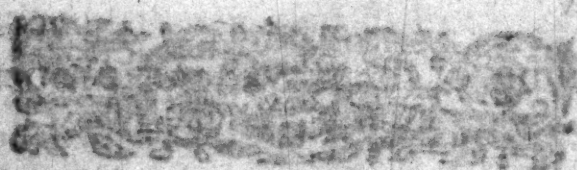
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Greenwich, 1676.

TO
THE RIGHT
HONOURABLE, S.
THOMAS COVENTRY, Knight,
Lord Keeper of the great Seale
of ENGLAND.

Right Honourable Lord,



Or long since I published a
small Treatise concerning
Fasting: and therein, the
matter giuing me occasion
for it, I mentioned some ho-
ly duties, fit (as I thought) to bee practised
vpon a fasting-day; as namely *Examina-
tion* of our liues, *Confession* of our sinnes,
and a stedfast *purpose* of a better life. But
these being there but named only, because
the handling of them was not proper to
that place: some haue desired a more full
direction for the right performance of
those holy duties. And because *Examina-
tion* of the Conscience is one of them, and

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

such a one, as doth leade and direct and carry with it all the rest: I was vpon this occasion perswaded to reuise some Notes, which lay by mee, concerning that argument: and thence I haue framed this short Treatise, which I therefore call the *Tribunall of the Conscience*, because the worke intended is a kinde of judiciary proceeding, wherein a mans conscience doth giue sentence vpon himselfe. And this little Treatise concerning the iudgement of the Conscience, I haue made bold to offer to your Lordships Patronage and Protection, who by your Office are *I V D G E* of the Court of Conscience: hoping that hauing your Name in the Front, it may finde the more fauour abroad; and nothing doubting, but if it finde entertainment, it will returne some part of thankfulnessse to your Lordship backe againe, by easing you and your Court of friuolous, tedious and ynrighteous quarels. For if Plaintifes would examine their conscience concerning the iustnesse of their cause, and the reasonablenesse of their demands, it would make them to
relinquish

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

relinquish their cauilling suites before they did comience them. And if Defendants would examine their conscience concerning the wrongs they haue done, and the dues which they owe, it would make them to giue a willing satisfaction, rather than to weary their neighbour with vnjust and shifting delaies. And if Lawyers would examine their conscience concerning such rules as Religion doth tye them to, in pleading for mens rights, it would make them to turne away such Clients, as brought them vnreasonable causes. And if Iudges would examine their conscience, concerning the duties of their place, and the condition of the suites that euery day are debated in the Court, it would make them so to entertaine all sorts of wranglers, as that they would haue no great lust to bring frivolous matters before a righteous Iudge. And so at length it might bee hoped, that that might happen in your Lordships time, which they say did happen in the time of * *Stapleton de Sir Thomas More,* * *Who* (as mine Author *tribus Tho-* saith) *hauiug ended a cause then before him,* *mis, in vita* *Tho. Mori,* *did cap. 3.*

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The Epistle Dedicatorie.

did call for the next to be brought: but answer
was returned him, that there was neuer ano-
ther cause behinde. And so the Court was
dismissed, because there were no more
causes to be heard. A great honour to the
Iudge, and a great happinesse to the people.
The like honour and happinesse I shall euer
pray may once happen in your Lordships
dayes; that so conscience preuailing, wran-
gling suites may haue an end. And heere-
with, continuing my prayers also for your
Lordships prosperitie, together with the
peace of a good conscience; I humbly
take my leaue.

*Your Honours deuoted
in all seruice,*

HENRIE MASON.



THE
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THE CONSCIENCE:

OR
A Treatise of Examination;

Shewing why and how a Christian should
*examine his conscience, and take an
account of his life.*

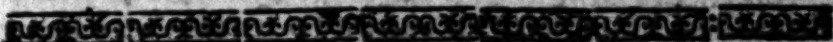
IN the Historie of the Creation, it
is said, that at the daies end G^d
looked vpon the worke that hee
had made, and hee *saw that it* (a) Gen. 1. 4, 10,
was good: and at the end of the 12, 18, 21, 25,
weeke, taking a view of all his
workes together, *he saw every thing that hee had* (b) Gen. 1. 31
made, and behold it was very good. Which shew-
eth, that after God had done his workes, hee did
reflect vpon them, and considered the quality and
the condition of them. In imitation heereof, or
in conformity hereunto, wise men doe with vs,
that at euery dayes end wee should reflect vpon

our works, and take a view of what we haue done that day; and at the weekes end, take account of all our doings for that space of time; and so further, as further occasion shall require. And this Enquirie or account-taking of our workes, they call the Examination of our soules or conscience. And surely, if wee did obserue this rule, still to reflect vpon our selues after our workes are done, though we could not finde them to be like vnto Gods workes, *good and very good*; nay we should rather finde the *naught & very naught*: yet by this viewing and searching into our workes, if it bee rightly and diligently performed, we may, without all doubt, make our workes much better than they are. In regard whereof, I haue assaied, whether by my poore labours this way, I may propound something to the Christian Reader, that may incite him to vndertake this worke willingly, or that may direct him how to performe it aright, and to the profit and spirituall good of his soule. And for this purpose, I haue thought these six Points worthy of consideration:

1. *What generall Inducements there are, that may animate a Christian to vndertake the search and practice of this worke.*
2. *Wherein the performance of this worke doth consist, and what actions or performances it doth include and containe.*
3. *What the Matter is, about which Examination is to be exercised.*
4. *In what Manner and order it may and ought to be performed.*
5. *What*

5. What be the Times, in which it is most fit to be used.

6. What fruit or spirituall good a man may get by this Exercise, when it is rightly and carefully performed.



CHAP. I.

What generall inducements there are, that may animate a Christian to goe about and undertake this worke.



NO man vndertaketh any worke, but in hope of some good to be gotten by it. For, *Omnia actio est propter finem*; All actions, say Philosophers, are for some end: and, *finis est bonum conuertuntur*; that which a man propoundeth to himselfe for his end, is the good which hee hopeth to gaine. This is generally true in all actions of any value, but most especially in such as be either difficult or distastfull to our nature: for men are hardly drawne to vndergoe such, but vpon good hopes that may recompence their labours; but without some reasonable inducements, no man would euer yeeld to take paines in difficult businesses. And vpon this consideration, being about an exercise that is somewhat laborious in it selfe, and very tedious to our vntoward nature, I haue thought it necessary in the very entrance, and as

it were by way of Preface, to consider what Inducements a reasonable man may haue to bestow his paines both in learning and in practising of this duty.

And for the inducements, (beside the speciall vses and benefits that may be reaped by it, whereof I shall haue fitter occasion to speake hereafter, when the nature and conditions of it be first laid downe and declared;) it will be sufficient, I suppose, for this place, to consider of some generall motiues; and they be these two especially, first *Precept*, and secondly *Practice*. By *Precept* I meane such commands as God hath imposed vpon vs in Scripture, for the doing of this worke; and by *Practice* I meane the examples of wise men, who haue gone before vs in the vse of it, together with the exhortations and encouragements, by which they animate and prouoke themselves and others to the practice of it. By the one of which it is commanded as a necessary duty, and by the other it is commended as a profitable worke, that may stead vs in the wel-ordering of our life: and by both these, any reasonable man, but especially every wise Christian may bee induced to vndergoe this worke, not doubting but that he is in a good way, in which so many wise and good men haue gone before him, and assuring himselfe of comfort and successe in that businesse, which God hath enioyned him. To come then to the Point.

I. The first inducement to this worke is Gods *Precept* or *Commandement*: such as that is,

Let

^a Let a man examine himselfe, and so let him eat of ^(a) 1 Cor. 11. this bread, and drinke of this cup. And that of the same Apostle; ^b Examine your selues, whether ye ^(b) 2 Cor. 13. 5. be in the faith; proue your own selues. And that againe; ^c Let every man (saith hee) proue his owne ^(c) Gal. 5. 4. worke; or examine his own worke: for the same word is vsed in this place and the former. And such also is that rule of David; ^d Commune with ^(d) Psal. 4. 4. your owne heart upon your bed, and be still. Vpon which words Saint Chrysostom commenteth to this purpose; What is this, that he saith, [Commune with your owne heart, &c.] Why? David (saith he) speaketh to this effect; After supper, when ye are going to sleepe, — ^e set vp the iudgement seate of the conscience, and of it require an account: and what euill counsell ye haue taken in the day time, either devising deceit, or circumventing your neighbour, or entertaining of any corrupt lust; those, when ye haue produced and brought them forth, and haue set your conscience as the Iudge to these wicked thoughts, strike them thorow, and take reuenge vpon them.

I I. The second inducement, is the practise of good men, mingled with their exhortations and encouragements to this worke. In which kinde, and for which purpose,

1. We first reade in Scriptures, of David, that he practised himselfe, what he preached to others. He that said vnto others, *Commune with your owne heart, &c.* saith of himselfe, *I call to remembrance my song in the night; I commune with mine owne heart, and my spirit made diligent search.* And in another place, *I thought on my waies, (saith hee)*

and turned my feete vnto thy testimonies. In which words we may by the way note two things: First, the acts that *David* did doe, and they were, hee thought on [or considered] his waies, and hee turned his feete vnto Gods Commandements, .i. he did goe on in the way of Gods Commandements, doing what God did command him. Secondly, we may note the order that *David* obserued in the doing of these acts, and that was, hee first thought on his own waies, and then he walked on in Gods Lawes: that is, first hee *examined*, and then he reformed his life. And heerein he hath left vs a paterne for our practice, that if we meane to amend our liues, wee also must first begin with the examination of our waies. And the like both practice and paterne wee haue in the afflicted Church in the Lamentations of *Jeremie*. For there the Church, taught by the Prophet, thus encourageth each other, *Let vs search (say they) and try our waies, and turne againe to the Lord*: implying, that examination is the ready way to conuersion and amendment.

(1.) Lam. 3.40.

Ad cuius la-
tus quam ap-
pensum cingulo
breuem libellum
conficerem, di-
dictis enim quotidie
cogitationes suas
in eo notare;

basq; omnes nun-
tiare Pastori soli-
tum. Climac.

Gradu. 4. extat
tom. 6. part. 2.

Biblioth. Patr.
pag. 251.

Non solum ap-
tem illum, sed et
alios quam plures
id facere ibidem
proposui. Clima-
c. ibid.

2. We reade in the writings of the Ancients, that religious people haue beene accustomed to keepe a day-booke of their actions, and out of that to take an account of their life. *Climacus* telleth, that in a religious house, whereinto he came, he found one, who had a little booke syed at his girdle, in which he wrote all his thoughts; that keeping a memoriall of them, he might (besides his owne care) shew them to his spirituall Father. *Nor* was it this man alone that did use this course, but I found

found (saith he) very many others to doe the like. And in the proceſſe of the ſame diſcourſe, he aduiſerh men who are carefull of their ſaluation, to obſerue the like order, telling vs, *that he is the beſt Banker or Tradesman, that every day in the evening taketh a perfect account of his gainer and his loſſes. Which a man can no way know better, then if every houre he note all things downe in his tables. And to like purpoſe,* ^a S. Chryſoſtom, ^b S. Baſil, ^c S. Gre. gorie, ^d S. Bernard, and others moe of thoſe an- cient Worthies, doe aduiſe and encourage religi- ous Chriſtians of their time, to a daily examinati- on of their conſciences, that in the morning they ſhould thinke how they haue paſſed the night, and in the evening, how they haue ſpent the day. And this daily care, and continuall accounting with their ſoules, was (as wee may well ſuppoſe) one chiefe reaſon, why thoſe times did ſo farre out- goe and exceede ours in zeale and deuotion. But certaine it is, that the practice of this exerciſe in thoſe daies, was very frequent and vſuall with all them that made any profeſſion of Religion; in- ſomuch as that ^e S. Gregory ſaith, *That the Elect do by no meanes ceaſe every day heedfully to weigh, either what good things they haue receiued from God, or what euill things they haue returned him for his good, by their naughty lining.* He adderh further, that

^a Optimus ille Trapezita eſt, qui quotidie veſpere lucrum ac detrimentum omnino capulat. Quod ſcite mani- feſtius non poteſt, niſi horis ſingulis in tabulis omnia denotet. Clima. ibid. pa. 355. B. (b) Chr. in Pf. 4. pa. 26. & in Mat. Hom. 43. [pag. 397. 398.] prope finem. (c) Serm. Com- monitor. de Abdicacione rerum, in fine. pag. 246. B. & de Inſtit. Mon. in fine. pa. 396. C. (d) Moral. lib. 25. cap. 6. (e) De vita ſo- litar. ad fratres de Monte Dei. pag 1026, & 1029.

(f) Debet [uniuscuſq; mens] caute penſare, vel qua ab eo [Domino] bona perceperit, vel qua mala bonis illius peruerſe viuendo reſponderit. Quod electi quotidie facere non ceſſant. Et paula poſt, Reproborum eſſe proprium ſolet, ſemper prauè agere, et nunquam qua egerint, reſta- rare. -- At contra electorum eſt, actus ſuos quotidie ab ipſo cogitationis ſeme diſcutere, et om- ne quod turbidum proſuit, ab intus exſiccare. Gregor. Moral. lib. 25. cap. 6.

^a Faciebat hoc
Sextius, ut con-
summato die
quum se ad noc-
turnam quietem
recepsisset, inter-
rogaret animum
suum, Quod
hodie malum
tuum sanasti?
Cui vitio ob-
stitisti? Qua
parte melior
es? Senec. de
Ira. l. 3. cap. 36.
pag. 598. Gy-
rald de Histor.
Poetarum,
Dialog. 4.
pag. 156.

^b Quotidie apud
me causam dico.
Quum subitum
e conspectu lumen
est, et contigit
uxor, moris iam
mei conscia, totū
diem mecum
serutor, facta ac
dicta mea reme-
tior. Nihil mihi
ipse abscondo, ni-
hil transco.

Quare enim
quicquam ex er-
roribus meis ti-
meam, quum
possum dicere;
Vide ne istuc
amplius facias,
vix tibi ignosco.
Senec. de Ira,
l. 3. c. 36. pag.
599.

it is usually a property of reprobates, alwaies to doe
euill, and neuer to recount what they haue done:—and
contrariwise, that it is the property of the Elect to
discusse their deedes euery day from the very thought,
which is the spring of all; and whatsoener they finde
to be myrie or muddy, to dry that vp to the very bot-
tome. And hereby we may see what the practice
& opiniō of the ancient Doctors of the Church,
and other religious men of those daies was con-
cerning this durie of Examination. I proceede
further to consider what wise and vertuous men
among the Heathen haue thought and said of it.

Thirdly then, we may reade in good Authors
among the Heathens, that their best and wisest
men were woont euery day to take an account of
themselves. Sextius the Romane Philosopher had
this custome, that at the end of the day, when hee be-
tooke himsele to his nights rest, hee would question
his soule, What maladie of thine hast thou this day
cured? What vice hast thou stood out against? In what
respect art thou better then thou wast before? And
Seneca, who reporteth this of Sextius, did practise
the like himsele. ^b Euery day (saith he) I pleade
my cause with my selfe. When the candle is remoued
from mine eyes, and my wife, who is priny to my cu-
stome, keepeth silence, I examine the whole day with
my selfe, I goe ouer againe, and weigh my deedes and
my words. I hide nothing from my selfe, I passe no-
thing ouer vntouched. For what need I to bee afraid
of my scapes, seeing I may say to my selfe; See thou doe
it no more hereafter; for this time I forgine thee, &c.
The like was the practice of Pythagoras and his
scholars;

scholars, ^a who had this rule given them from their Master, that every day when they come home, they should demand each man of himselfe, Wherein have I transgressed? What good have I done? and what duty have I left undone? And ^b Plutarch commendeth the same rule to them that would busie themselves in that which may auail them. Nor was the custome of Plato much different from this practice, ^c who, as often as hee was among men that mis-behaved themselves, was accustomed to private to question with himselfe, **AND AM NOT I SUCH A ONE?** or, Have not I done the like? And in a word, so generall and common is this practice among all men, to examine or take accounts of their state in all businesses of moment, whether temporall or spirituall, as that our Saviour asketh of the multitudes about him, ^d Which of you intending to build a Towre, sitteth not downe first & counteth the cost, whether he haue sufficient to finish it &c. or what King going to make warre against another King, sitteth not downe first & consulteth whether he bee able with ten thousand to meete him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, hee sendeth an Ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. He meaneth, that there is no man of any ordinary capacitie and wit, but if he bee to build, will first take account of his abilitie to perfect the worke; or if he be to make warre, will first take a view of his strength to goe thorow with the victory, that either he may provide that which is sufficient for the successe, or else he may leaue off his intenti-

(a) Fortu adu- pulat admonere
filius, ut ista
quodidie quum
domum ingrede-
rentur, dicerent,
ut in p[er]p[et]ro;
in d[omi]ni p[er]p[et]ro;
ut in d[omi]ni p[er]p[et]ro;
Diogen.
Laert. in vita
Pythagoræ, p[er]
581.

(b) De Curio-
sitate. p. 515. f.

(c) Plato, quoniam
interfuisse homi-
nibus contra de-
corum agentibus,
digressus scribit
ita scripsi alligari;
ut me ap[ud] d[omi]ni
vultu & Plut.
de utilit. capi-
end. ex hostib[us]
pag. 88. D.

(d) Luk. 14. 28,
29. 30. 31. 32.
33.

en. And then he applyeth this practice in mat-
 ters of the world, to a like care in matters of a
 mans soule; So (saith he) *whoſoever be he of you
 that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot bee my
 Diſciple.* The meaning is as if he should say, So
 every one of you, that meaneth to be my Disci-
 ple, should first sit you downe, and caſt with your
 ſelves, what it will coſt you to bee a Chriſtian;
 and that is the renouncing of all the world, and
 the forſaking of all that you have in the world:
 And therefore you should reſolve in the begin-
 ning, either to leave all, if neede be, for Chriſts
 ſake, or elſe never vndertake to be Chriſtians.

And theſe things laid together, that al wiſe men,
 whether Chriſtian or Heathen, have thought this
 courſe of Examination to bee neceſſary, both in
 things of the world, and in things of God; yea,
 and that our bleſſed Saviour, and the holy Ghoſt
 ſpeaking in the Scriptures, have commended this
 practice vnto vs: theſe, I ſay, may be ſtrong in-
 ducements to make vs well-affected to the worke,
 before we know in particular what is requited in
 the vndertaking of it, or what may bee expected
 by the performing of it.

And to goe thorow with the victory, that
 the ſuccell, or elſe he may leave off his intent.

And therefore look what the proceed

~~of this work is, and what the manner of it is~~

Inducements, where men are questioned and let

is shewd the like counte

What doth the performance of this worke doth consist,

and what actions or performances it doth require.

concerning, for as in those legal proceedings,

Having hitherto prepared the Rea-

ders mind to have a good opinion

on of this worke, I now go on to

consider, wherein it doth con-

sist. And for concerning hereof,

we must consider, that Examina-

tion is a kind of judicary proceeding, in which

man keepeth private Sessions at home, passing

sentence of all his workes and actions, as Gods

Law doth require. This the Apostle implyeth,

when he first said, *Let a man examine himselfe,*

by so he knoweth his own work. (a) 1 Cor. 11.

or he addeth by way of confir-

mation, to proue the necessity or profitableness of

this work, *For if we would judge our selves, we should*

not be judged; that is, if wee would censure and

pass sentence on our selves, by a diligent perfor-

mance of this worke of Examination, God would

spare vs, or he would not censure vs the second

time, after we had done it our selves already. To

this purpose, I have chosen to call it *an*

Examination for the conscience, and *an*

Examination for the conscience, and *an*

that in this private judgement there wanteth no

fact that is usual for punishing of guilty persons. For

the Conscience (saith he) is the Accuser, Reason is the

Judge, and the will is the Judge.

Greg. Moral. l. 25. cap. 6.

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Greg. Moral. l. 25. cap. 6.

sioner. And therefore looke, what the proceeding is, and what actions are usuall in publike Iudgements, where men are questioned and sentenced according to Law: and the like course is heere to bee held, and the same actions are to be performed in the examination of a mans soule & conscience. For as in those legall proceedings, there is first an enquire into the facts, what hath beene done, which by the Law deserveth censure. Secondly, there is sentence pronounced, according to the nature of the crimes, and the prooffe made of them. Thirdly, there is punishment inflicted, either for the amendment of the offender, or for example and terror to others, that they offend not in like sort. Or, if the partie accused be cleared by the Iurie, hee is acquitted and set free by the Iudge. So in this Court of private Sessions, first, there is an enquire or search, to finde out the transgressions or offences of the soule. Secondly, there is sentence to be pronounced, according as the nature of the facts doth require. Thirdly, if the sentence bee condemnatory, punishment is to be inflicted by the offenders conscience vpon himselfe: that by taking a holy reuenge vpon his owne folly, hee may be made more carefull of offending afterward. Or if a man shall be so happy, as after enquire he find nothing by himselfe, he may cheere his soule with an *Eagle serve bene &c.* *Well done thou good and faithfull servant.* And heereby the sincere Christian may bee encouraged in Gods service, and animated to proceede in those holy courses,

courses, in which hee hath found so much comfort already. And because there is no man that doth faithfully performe this service of examining his soule, but he shall be sure to finde something, wherein hee hath sinned, and something wherein he hath served God aright; therefore he shall neuer want matter either to condemne, or in some part to absolue himselfe; more or lesse, according as his life hath bene in times past; and according as he hath made vse of this and such other exercises of Religion. And consequently in every Examination, if it be thoroughly performed, a man will lightly gaine two helps toward Heaven. First, by condemning of himselfe, he will conceiue feare of relapsing into sinne; and secondly, by acquitting himselfe, hee will gaine more comfort to proceede in well-doing.

By this it may appeare in part, what the nature of this worke is, and wherein it doth consist. But for the more distinct knowledge of this point, it may further be noted, that there be two sorts of acts, which are implyed in this word Examination, and is some sort included in it: some are essentiall, and contained in the nature of it; and some are accidentall, and to be conioyned with it, and indeed are presupposed to accompany it, when it is rightly vnderaken.

Of the former sort are these three, 1. Discussion, 2. Application, and 3. Censure.

Discussion is a sifting of our life and dealings, by which we pull things out of the heape where before they lay, confused and confused.

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which we set every fact of ours in the open view, that they may be scanned and seene by themselves what they are.

Application is a laying of these acts thus scanned and found out, to the rule of Gods Law, which is the touchstone of all our doings, and according to which God will judge us at the last day: that so it may appeare how and wherein we have swarmed from Gods Law, or have observed it. *Lastly, Confession* is the iudgement that our mindes and consciences doe give vpon our deeds according to the rule of the Law, both for the quality of them, whether they bee righteous or sinfull, and for the quantity of the offence, whether it be great or small, whether a sinne of ignorance, or a sinne against conscience, and whether of humane frailty, or of obdurate continuance.

The first act serueth to shew what wee have done: the second, what wee should haue done: and the third, what the doome is that wee haue deserved either by well or ill doing. And these three laid together, doe (as I take it) make vp the nature of this worke of Examination, so that we may not vnjustly describe it out of its owne principles, in some such manner as this; Examination is a discussion of a mans life, that his workes may be seene and considered according to the rule of Gods Law.

Secondly, for the second sort of acts, which are implied in this word, and ought to be ioyned with this worke, they are two especially, the *going*

going before the proper acts of Examination, and that is a purpose to better a mans spirituall estate, by correcting what is amisse, and confirming what is sound and vpright. And the other is an act that followeth after Examination, & that is an effectuall practice or execution of such rules and orders as may back our examination, and make it more effectual & vsfull. For which purpose, these rules following may perhaps be not impertinent nor vnfit: every wise Christian may, as his experience shall giue him further occasion, adde, and vse more of his owne or other mens obseruation.

1. Rule. That after wee haue examined our soule, we doe then compare our present with our precedem state, and consider whether we haue amended indeed, what we blamed our selues for in our former examinations; and how wee haue either increased or decreased in grace and goodness: that if we haue been slothfull and vnprofitable seruants, we may soubbe and shame our selues for it before God and our owne consciences, in some such manner as our Lord snubbed the euill seruant in the Gospell. *I thou wicked and slothfull seruant, dost thou say, I haue bene diligent, and in some measure haue increased our Lords talents: that then wee may cheete our soules out of the comfort of our wel-doing, and praise our God, that hath both giuen vs talents to trade with, and grace to vse them to his glory. For this practice will whet our diligence for time to come.*

2. That euery morning before wee begin our worke.

1. Rule.

ἐλάττωσιν ἑμὲ
ἐργασίας ἐπι-
σημειώμενον,
σύμβολα τῆς
ἐν ἐμοὶ ἀντι-
στοιχίας πρὸς
τὴν βασιλείαν.

Basil. de Abdi-
catione rerum
in fine. p. 246.

(b) Matt. 25. 26.

2. Rule.

worke, we consider what we are going about, what occasions of doing good either to our selves or others, we may meete with, and what tentations may assault vs in the businesse of that day; that so wee may lay hold vpon all occasions of doing good, and prepare our selves to stand out with courage against all oppositions and tentations that may hinder vs in our duties, or draw vs into sinne. For by this meanes, occasions of doing well shall not ouerslip vs vn-espied, nor will tentations surprize vs at vnawares.

3. Rule.

3. That if we haue profited in grace, and haue taken occasions of doing good, we consider at fit times, by what meanes wee haue profited and haue beene enabled to doe well; that so we may make more constant vse of such meanes, by which we haue found so much sensible good already. And if wee haue decayed, or forslowd our opportunities, or haue runne into any sinne, then we should obserue, what it was that did misleade vs, and by what tentations wee were overcome, that our former errors may make vs more warie and more resolute against cases of danger, for the time to come. For by this meanes we shall euery day gaine some experience, how to behaue our selves in the daily conflicts of our Christian warfare.

4. Rule.

4. That we recall home our thoughts, as wee meete with any occasions of moment, or light vpon any such businesse, as concerning which we haue formerly conceived a purpose of warie and religious behauiour: that while we are in doing
of

of the worke, we may remember to make vse of our former resolution, and now practise what before we did purpose. For by this meanes wee shall be sure that our good purposes shall not bee idle and without fruites, as in many men it falleth out, who are like sluggish people, that ouer night appoint to rise early, but when the morning cometh, cannot abide to leaue their warme beds.

¶ These Rules I haue thought on, as being in mine opinion fit to backe our Examination, and to make it more powerfull for an holy life. Others, as I said before, may in their daily obseruation adde more, and perhaps finde out some better then these. And as in the ordering of our bodily health, Physicians aduise their Patients to follow that whereof they finde good, and to auoyd that which doth not agree with their temper: so it is good counsell in the ordering of our soules, to make daily vse of that which by experience wee finde either to strengthen grace, or to weaken: since it is as contrariwise to flie from all such occasions and vsages, as wee see or haue found to hurt or endanger vs. I chiefly adde thus much more, than the former part of this, whereof now I haue beene speaking, though in themselves simply considered they be but Adjuncts and Attendants on Examination, without which it may subsist in its own nature, and therefore againe not necessary of themselves. The Scholes doe speake: yet in the vse of the word, and in the interpretation of the Scripture they are implied, included, and presupposed to goe with it, and attend

[continued]

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tend it, as being necessary *ad bene esse*, to the well doing of this worke: as may appeare by these reasons.

1. Reason.

Ioh. 2. 4.

1. It is the use and custome of Scripture, vnder words of knowledge belonging to the vnderstanding, to comprehend affections and practice. As when Saint Iohn saith, *Hee that saith I knowe God, and keepeth not his Commandements, is a lyer, and the truth is not in him*: hee meaneth not by the word [*knowe*] a bare and simple knowing and apprehending, which the learned call *cognitio* *ap- prehensio*; but he meaneth an effectuall and working knowledge, which breedeth or bringeth forth such affections in the heart and such actions in the life, as that knowledge directeth men to: which knowledge they call [*cognitio affectiva*]. And so in this case, Examination is properly a worke of vnderstanding, singling things out of the confused thicke, that they may appeare what they are, but by way of consequence it doth imply such affections and actions, as this worke of the vnderstanding is intended for, which is the bettering and mending of our spirituall estates, and ordering leuery thing for the best aduantage of our soules and eternall good.

2. Reason.

1 Cor. 11. 28.

2. Secondly, the thus much is implied and included in this word, may hereby appeare, that the Apostle speaking of the danger of unworthy receiving of the Lords Supper, and prescribing mannered correction about that day, saith, *Let man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drinke of the cup*. For if by the word

[*examine*]

[*examine*] he meant nothing but *discussing* and *sifting* without *terrifying* and *hincending*; he should allow men to go to the Communion with the conscience of sinne, and without reformation of life. And which is yet worse, should approve of a man as a worthy guest at the Lords Table, onely because he hath learned to know his estate, though he no way means to amend it; whereas this knowledge of a mans selfe would increase his sinne, and make him the lesse welcome unto God; according to that rule of our Saviour, *That* (a) Eccles. 10.
Luk. 12. 47.
servant which knew his Lords will, and prepared not himselfe, neither did according to his will, shall bee beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall bee beaten with few stripes. And therefore when the Apostle saith, *Let a man examine,* and so *let him eate,* &c. hee meaneth, that after hee hath examined, hee should amend whatsoever is amiss, and do whatsoever upon examination he shall find necessary or fit to be done. And hence it followeth, that a purpose to amend our life, and to doe what upon our examining shall appere necessary for our soules, is a necessary duty as an antecedent act that should goe before Examination, and that a practice of such things as by tryall shall appere usefull for this purpose, is another necessary duty, as a consequent act that should follow after it. And so in conclusion it appeareth that there are three especiall acts required for the right performance of this worke: 1. a constant resolution to amend and better the office of the soules duty.

ligent search, thereby to gaine the right know-
ledge of ite and by an effectuall performance of
all such things, as are auailable for this purpose.
And out of all these laid together, we may make
amore full description to this purpose. Exam-
pation is a Discuſſion of a mans life, for finding
out the true estate of a mans soule toward God,
accompanied with a purpose and endeavour to doe
what ſet vpon it shall appeare requisite for
saluation and the good of a mans soule.

God according to the rule of our Saviour, Luk. 12. 47.

~~And the first thing to be considered is the~~
~~state of the soule, whether it be in a state of~~
~~grace or of sin. And the second thing to be~~
~~considered is the manner of life, whether it be~~
~~conformable to the will of God or not.~~
~~And the third thing to be considered is the~~
~~degree of sin, whether it be mortal or venial.~~
~~And the fourth thing to be considered is the~~
~~cause of sin, whether it be the flesh or the~~
~~devil.~~

And thus we have spoken of the objects
which we are to consider of the soule
in matters about which they
are to be bestowed and employed.
And it may bee considered two
wayes either generally and such as it is in the
largest extent, which wee may call the adequate
objects, or specially, and such as is in more prin-
cipall manner to bee respected and looked to,
which may be called the Principal or speciall ob-
jects. And first for the adequate objects, including
every thing that ought to be examined, or about
which a Christian should examine himselfe, it is
what concerneth either thought or word or deede, which

carrieth any respect either of righteousness or sin-
fulness in it, or all both our good and our euill
deedes. For Examination being (as before was
noted) a kinde of iudiciary proceeding with our
owne soules, in which wee keepe Sessions at
home, that we may prepare for the great Iudge-
ment: it hath for its obiect the same matter, that
shall be discuffed and sentenced at the day of the
last Iudgement. And that is, (as Solomon telleth
vs) every worke whether good or euill. For G O D (a) Eccles. 12.
(saith he) shall bring every worke into iudgement, 14
with every secret thing, whether it bee good or euill:
that is, every thing that is morally euill or mo-
rally good, or which is either sinfull or righteous.
And therefore in imitation of Gods proceeding
in his Iudgement, we also should proceede in our
iudging of our selues, which is to consider of e-
very thing, which is either good or euill, sinfull
or righteous, a breach of Gods Law or a perfor-
mance of it. But for our more distinct vnderstanding, and our
better direction heerein, it will not bee amisse to
consider our good and our euill workes, each a-
part by themselves. And first for our euill deedes or our sinnes, wee
may note these rules following. We must consider and examine our selues,
as well concerning our omissions of duties, as
commissions of euils. For in the last Iudgement,
our Lord the Iudge of quicke and dead, he will
not onely giue sentence against murders and op-
pressions and robberies, and such like, but
gainst

(a) Eccles. 12.

14

Psalm 139.
Job 34.

(a) Chron.
11.

(b) Matth. 23.

41, 42, 43.

gainst vnmmercifalnesse also, and the not feeding of the hungry, the not lodging of the stranger, the not clothing of the naked, the not visiting of the sick, &c. And so when wee are to iudge our selues, wee must censure not onely our hurting of our neighbour, but our not helping of him; nor onely our back-biting of our neighbour, but our not defending of his good name; nor onely our persecutting of Gods Word, but our not profiting by it; nor onely our robbing of the poore, but our not relieuing of them: and so in all other the like cases, our not doing of that which is good, when dutie doth require it of vs, is culpable before God, and is part of that matter about which our Examination ought to be exercised.

We must consider not onely the substance of our sinnes, but the circumstances of them also; such as are the persons, the time, the place, the fashion or manner of doing, &c. for all these may either aggravate or mitigate the sinne. So we see that the treason of *Iudas* is counted the more grievous, because he was one of Christs familiar friends, which did eat of his bread; and *Achan's* his idolatrie was the more hainous, because hee set his idol in the House of God, of which God had said to David, and to Solomon his Sonne, In this House and in Ierusalem which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever. And so the cruel dealing of the Iews was the more hainous, because in the day of their fest they did exact all their labours, and did smite with the fist of wickednes. And *Solomons* idolatrie did anger & offend God

Psal. 41. 9. &
Ioh. 13. 18.

(a) 2 Chron.
33. 7.

(b) Isa. 58. 3, 4.

Revelation (c)

Ex. 32. 1, 2

finis

& C

God

God the more, because *his heart was turned from* (c) 1 King. 11.
the Lord, which had appointed upon him miserie, and 9, 10.
had commanded him concerning this thing, that he
should not goe after other Gods. And so our finnes
will be the more grievous, if we wrong them who
haue helped vs, or if in the Church of God, and
in the time of his seruice, our hearts doe meditate
revenge, or forecalt vniust deuices, or take plea-
sure to thinke on our fleshly lusts, &c. And there-
 fore these circumstances are to come into the ac-
 count together with the main finnes. 110 and 1
 103. Thirdly, not onely the finne, but the occa-
 sion of it is to be considered: for this may either
 increase or diminish the guiltinesse of it. As the
 rich man that had many sheepe of his owne, and
 yet tooke away the poore mans sheepe, so as to his
 friend welcome with, was the more grievous of
 friends by much, because having no need, hee
 did rob the poore man. And againe, the con-
 sideration of the occasion or provocation by
 which we were led into finnes, may reach vs will
 done, by shunning such occasions to gett free from
 the finnes: *and for the Lord* (c) 1 King. 10.
 hee did it by the way to reckon among our finnes,
 that must be accounted for, not onely our com-
 missions of euill deedes, and omission of good
 duties, but euen our vnperfect and defectiue per-
 formances of vs of the Church of God
 doth defend themselves, *as all the* (b) Isa. 64. 6.
as we are filthy ragges, and in respect of these it
was, that the High Priest was by the Law (c) Exod. 28. 38.
carrie the iniquity of the holy things, which hee did
 account

righteous and holy, lest wee deceive our selves by over-partiall iudgement.

2. Because in the very workes which are truly good, wee doe many times intermingle corruptions of our owne: As sometimes there are ill ends in our good dooers, as ^a Jezebel proclaimed a fast to cloke her murder withall, and ^b the Pharisees fasted and prayed and gaue almes, for gaining of vaine praises. And sometimes our good duties are performed in an euill manner, as the ^c Midwives saued the childrens liues, by telling of a lye; and ^d Zipporah circumcised her sonne, in a petrish humour; and ^e *Axzech* stayed the Arke from falling, without sufficient warrant for such a worke. But most times there are distractions, and worldly or perhaps wicked thoughts in the midst of our best deuotions: and alwayes there are defects and imperfections and failings when we are most feruent and best affected. And for discerning of these, our best workes deserue a strict account, that we may learne to separate the *precious from the vile*: and neither be too highly conceited of our weake performances, nor too little affected with our corruptions and infirmities.

3. Our good workes are to bee considered in our Examinations, that by those things which are able to abide the touchstone, we may gaine courage against oppositions of men, and comfort against the tentations of Satan, and a settled resolution to proccede and goe on in a daily practice of good workes; alwayes praising God for

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these

(a) 1 King. 21.

(b) Mat. 6. 2, 5,

9. 16.

(c) Exod. 1. 17,

19.

(d) Exod. 4. 25.

(e) 1 Chron. 13.

9. compared

with cap. 15.

12, 13.

these mercies; because it is hee that worketh in vs both the will and the deede. And in these respects, the consideration of our good workes is not without good vie. And this may suffice for the *aliquant* object, or the matter of Examination in generall and in the largenesse of it.

I I. Secondly for the principall Object, or the speciall matter which is to come into Examination, it is euery such sinne as is likely to breede vs some especiall danger. For if a Citie be besieged, wise *Gouernours* will take care of euery posterne doore, and of euery part of the Walls, to reparaire what is decayed, and to keepe all safe from the Enemy: but if one Gate be more likely to be entered than other, or if any part of the Wall be weaker or more easily to be broken downe, men will there set the watch the surest, where the danger is the greatest. And if a man be distempered with sundry diseases, a wise *Physician* will take care of all, to ease the Patient, as much as may be, of euery one of them: but if some speciall disease be more dangerous to the sicke man, than others are; the *Physician* will bend his cure that way especially, where the life of his Patient is most endangered. And so it is, or should be with vs in respect of our soules: Wee haue heere a Fort to keepe, which is euery day assaulted by our Enemies; and we haue a diseased soule of our owne, distempered with many spirituall maladies: But some maladies are worse then other, and some parts of this Fort are weaker or more in danger then others are: I meane, there are some sinnes, by

by which the Diuell may more easily surprize and captivate our soules. And therefore, as wee should keepe diligent warch against them all, so wee should especially bend our forces against those that doe or may more especially breede vs harme, and hinder our saluation. And consequently, Examination being an approued means for grubbing vp of sinne, wee should apply this exercise against all sinnes in generall, but more especially against those, from which wee may in reason feare the greatest danger. And these are either such sinnes as are *easily contracted*, or such as are *hardly recovered*. For into the one sort men fall often, and out of other they doe seldomer recover, if they once fall into them: and so the one sort will endanger vs by the *frequence* of our falls, and the other by the *difficultie* of our rising after wee bee downe. But for better and more distinct vnderstanding of this point, wee may in a more particular manner consider the seuerall sorts of sinne, which in either of these two respects may breede some especiall danger. And of this kinde I take these sinnes following to bee.

1. Those that be great and *reigning* sins, such as the Apostle saith doe exclude a man out of Gods Kingdome. And in this kind he reckoneth, *fornication, idolatrie, adultery, effeminatenesse, sodomie, theft, couetousnes, drunkennes, railing, extortion.* Of which sinnes, and such like, he saith, that they that are guilty of them, *shall not inherit the Kingdome of God.* And he meaneth, that while they are such, or till by repentance and forsaking of

(s) 1 Cor. 6. 9.
Galat. 5. 19.
20, 21.

them, they have obtained pardon, they shall never come into Gods Kingdome. Against these

(a) Psal. 19. 13. *David prayeth, Keepe backe thy servant from presumptuous sins, lest when thou shalt be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.* And against these wee

should watch and pray, that we may avoyd them; or if we have falne into them, wee should by examination learne to conceale the danger, that by repentance we may gaine pardon. For whereas

(b) Psal. 19. 12. *lesser finnes, such as David calleth errors and secret faults, i. finnes, which in regard of their fineness, and our frailty, doe escape vs through ignorance, unwarines, or common and humane infirmities; whereas, I say, these sins are in the best of*

1 Ioh. 1. 8.

Gods children; (for even they say, *If we say that we have no sinne, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us:*) one of these other grosse finnes, being such as can not be committed, but with confidence and purpose of sinne in the offender, doth betraye men for the present of grace, and all title and interest to the Kingdome of Heaven. And therefore we should have an especiall care to examine our soules concerning these grosser finnes, that we doe not suffer our selves to live and lye in any of them.

1 Cor. 10. 12. (a)
1 Cor. 10. 12.
1 Cor. 10. 12.

2. Sinnes of *relapse* or relapse, when we fall backe into the former sinne, after our repentance and vowes of a better life. For relapses into sickness are dangerous for the body, and relapses into sinne are no lesse dangerous for the soule. And therefore our Saviour said to the man whom

whom hee had cured of his lamenesse, *Since no* Ioh. 5. 14.
more, lest a worse thing come vnto thee: and that
 if the *unclean spirit*, which hath bene cast out of
 a man, doe returne and finde the house swept and gar- Luk. 11. 24.
 nished, that is, made fit for the habitation of such
 a guest, *when he goeth and taketh with him seuen*
other spirits more wicked then himselfe, and they en-
ter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man
is worse then the first. By this it appeareth, that
 these kind of finnes, into which we have fallen
 before, if after our recouery we relapse into them
 againe, are most dangerous and preiudiciall to a
 mans soule. And therefore when wee call our
 soules to account, wee should more especially
 examine them concerning those sinnes which
 we committed before time, that wee may see
 how well or how ill wee haue continued in
 our course of our repentance and amendment of our
 sinnes that we will doe our best to resist
 such, I meane, as wee are inclined vnto, either
 through temper of nature or custome of life. For
 these finnes may breede speciall dangers, because
 we are ready to drop into them, when our
 Tempter bridleth, beside our owne corruption.
 Of such I doe feel mee to speake, when I say, PSAL. 18. 23.
*I kept my selfe from all euill, and I refused
 to doe any thing that I should be asham'd of.*
 And therefore in the
 daily walk of our soules, we should more espe-
 cially question and examine the conscience
 those sinnes, to which we are addicted or dispo-
 sed, either by nature or by custome. yea, not
 only the sinnes of each single person, but also
 the sinnes of each family, and of each church.

or trade, may especially endanger him, because he hath by his very course of life, so many and so usuall occasions to be tempted by them. Never a day, nor scarce an houre of a day, but some businesse will come in his way, either in dealing with others, or in deliberating by himselfe, by which he may be occasioned either to omit some dutie, or to doe some wrong, or to follow some neerer way of thriving than G O D doth allow him. And amidst so many and frequent occasions, it will bee hard to stand vpright, without much care and watchfulness. And therefore as S. Paul prescribeth vnto seuerall men, the duties that belong to their seuerall states and conditions; as to him *that hath the gift of prophecie, that hee prophesie according to the proportion of faith*; and to him *that hath an office, that he waite upon his office*; and so he *that teacheth, on teaching, &c.* so, if we desire to looke into the state of our soules, and to learne from our owne hearts, how well or how ill we haue done our duties, we should haue an especiall eye to such things as appertaine to our particular places and callings. The sinnes of the time, place, and companie in which we line, haue speciall danger in them. For first they will draw vs by their very example to partake with them; in so much, as that men who at the beginning doe abhorre them, yet by continuance of time, are insensibly carried with them, before themselves can tell how. And secondly, euill men doe desire companie in their sinne, and doe usually striue by all perswasions to winne

winne over to their side those that are better affected. And therefore Solomon saith; *My sonne,* (a) *Prou. 1. 10,* *if sinners entice thee, consent thou not: if they say, Come with vs, let vs lay waite for blood, &c; we shall finde all precious substance; we shall fill our houses with spoile; cast in thy lot among vs, for vs all haue one purse: My sonne, walke not thou in the way with them; &c.* In which words, Solomon first supposeth that sinners will entice, and we all plausible allurementsto perswade others to their society; and then hee aduises the righteous to take heede of them and their sugred baites. And so, if we liue amongst such men, we must expect prouocation from them; and therefore should vse all prouidence for freeing of our selues of them. Thirdly, wicked men, if they cannot win others to take part with them, yet they will molest them, because their contrarie life is an open shame to these mens dealings. And therefore the Wise man bringeth in the wicked; thus deliberating or rather resolving with themselves; *Let vs lye in waite for the righteous, because he is not for our turne, and he is cleane contrary to our doings: he vpbraideth vs with our offending the Law, & chideeth to our infamie the transgressings of our education. He was made to reprove our thoughts: he is grievous to vs, euen to behold: for his life is not like a thers mear, his waies are of another facion. &c.* And this daily molestation from the wicked, will make good men afraid to doe well, for feare of giuing offence, or incurring danger: which made *Dauid* to say, that *the rod of the wicked should not rest vpon*

on the lot of the righteous: lest the righteous put
forth their hands vnto iniquitie: implying, that if
the wicked were suffered still to scourge & molest
Gods people, it might be a meanes to make them
forsake their integrity, either by seeking to paci-
fie the wicked, or to protect themselves. By these
considerations it appeareth, that in the company
of euill men are many prouocations to sinne,
partly by their bare example, partly by their euill
counsell, and most of all by derision and repro-
ches, or by oppression and iniuries. In respect
whereof we may say, as S. Hieron out of Cy-
prian, [*Nellus diu tutus periculo proximus*]. No
man can be long safe, that is alwaies in danger. And
therefore such finnes doe require speciall care and
watchfulnesse.

* Hieron. in
lib. 2. Com-
mentar. in A-
mos Proem.
ad Pammach.

(a) 1 King. 22.

31.

(b) Ver. 36.

(c) In pugna ad
Bastarnos bo-
ratus est Lacedæ-
monius, ut omi-
fis reliquis, in so-
lum pugnarent
Epaminondas;
solos inquit
prudentes esse
fortes, et illo no-
cato, facilem fore
de reliquis victo-
riam: id quod
etiam euenit.

Plut. Apophth.
in Agefil. pag.
24. C.

These and such like finnes as these, because they
breede the greatest danger, are to bee sifted and
censured with the greatest care. And so wee see
that wise men haue held the like course in matters
of this life, and haue found good successe by it.
When the King of Syria was to fight with Is-
rael, hee commanded his Captaines, Fight neither
with small nor great, fight onely with the King of Is-
rael. And the event sheweth that the course was
good: for when the King was slaine, a Procla-
mation then went throughout the Host, Every man to
his Citie, and every man to his own Countrey. And in
like sort Agefilus gaue aduice to the Lacedæmo-
nians in a certaine battell against the Thebans, that
they should omit all others, and fight onely against
Epaminondas, who was the Leader of the Field

and

and a man of as great wisdom as Goliath: and he gaue this reason for it, because he being killed, it would be easie to conquer all the rest: which (as my Author saith) fell out accordingly. And so, vwhen Goliath was slaine, the Philistines seeing that their Champion was dead, fled before Israel. And so in like manner in our conflicts with sinne, it will be good counsell, that sometimes omitting all other vices, we bend ourselues wholly against that sin which troubleth vs most: because, if once wee haue quelled our master sinnes, the Devils great Leaders and Champions, it will be the more easie to chase away the rest. And for this cause, in the performance of this worke of Examination, a speciall care must bee had against these great Commanders, that they scape not away in the throng.

~~CHAPTER IIII. OF THE MANNER TO BE OBSERVED IN THIS WORKE, OR HOW A CHRISTIAN SHOULD PROCEEDE IN EXAMINING OF HIMSELF.~~

CHAP. IIII.

Of the maner to be obserued in this worke, or how a Christian should proceede in examining of himselfe.



He matter being declared, the next thing to be considered, is the manner: for direction wherein, two things are in the beginning to bee noted:

1. That in all workes of this kinde, the maner is much what to be regulated by the matter and the

the end. For Examination, in what kind soeuer it be, being a searching or enquire after something that we desire to know, is alwaies to be so performed, as may best serue for the bolting out of that truth which we search for. And as the matter, whereof the question is, and the end for vvhich the enquire is made, and the discouerie which is desired in this worke, doe differ and disagree; so the manner of proceeding in making the search, will be different and vnlike it selfe, as the things whereto it is applyed doe require. As for example, if the Goldsmith be to try his metall, hee vseth the touchstone and the fornace, because these are the proper meanes which his arte doth teach for finding out that which hee desireth to know. And if the Carpenter be to try his worke that he hath framed, whether it be agreeable to arte, & fit for vse, he vseth his squire and line and compasse, because they beeing applyed to his worke, will shew how well it is fitted for the purpose. And so in like maner, if a Physician be to try the state of his Patient, hee looketh vpon the vrine, feeleth the pulse, and obserueth the symptoms. And if a Iudge be to examine a suspected person, he questioneth him about circumstances, and examineth him vpon such interrogatories, as may entangle any man, that meaneth by glozing shifts to obscure the truth. Thus in examinations, men follow that course which is suteable to the matter, and peculiar for that end whereto it is referred.

2. Note

That Examination, as heere it is intended, being a *disputation* of a mans life, for discerning his spirituall

spirituall state, is a kind of *iudiciarie* proceeding, as hath beene shewed already. And therefore looke what course Iudges doe hold in their Sessions, or at their Assises, the like course will be fit to be held in this worke. Now in their Sessions, this is the course: They first enquire into the facts of men, and that enquirie is made by the testimonie of witnesses, and other proofes that may shew what their deedes have been: and secondly, when they have found out the truth of the fact, then they goe to the rule of the Law, and that being laid to the fact, directeth the Iudge to give sentence according vnto right. And so in these Sessions kept in the conscience, and held for the ordering of our soules, we have two things to enquire after; the one what our actions and facts have beene, so farre forth as they concerne our spirituall life. And for finding out thereof, our best proofe is the testimonie of our owne conscience: which is as good as a thousand witnesses, if our selues corrupt it not. And the other is, how well these actions doe agree with Gods Law, (which is the Law that bindeth the conscience, and con- cometh the soule,) that thence wee may learne what to iudge of our life, how farre forth it agree- eth with Gods Law, or swarveth from it.

These two things being first noted in generall, for more particular direction it must bee further considered, that this comparing of our life with Gods Law, may be done two wayes: wee may either beginne with Gods Law, and first see what it doth require at our hands, and thence proceede

to our selues, and question with our soules, how and wherein wee haue obserued or transgressed those rules. Or secondly, we may beginne with our selues, and enquire what our doings are, and then goe to Gods Law, that we may learne what to iudge of such workes.

If we begin with Gods Law, then we must doe two things.

First, wee must get a competent knowledge of Gods Law, that wee may know in some measure what each precept doth require of vs, and what the meaning is of all such Comandements as concerne our practice, the summe whereof is contained in the Decalogue or ten Comandements. For as an vnskillfull man is neuer the neerer for a line or rule, if he haue not beene taught the Carpenters trade, nor knoweth not the vse of these things; no more can a Christian be any whit the better for hearing or hauing of Gods Law to direct him, vnlesse he know the meaning of it, and can tell what vices are forbidden, and what vertues are commanded in euery Precept. Whence it followeth, that they which haue neuer bin trained vp in the grounds of Religion, nor haue not the knowledge of their Catechisme, cannot possibly goe about this so necessary a worke with any dexterity or profit to their soules.

Secondly, when a man hath learned in some good sort the meaning of the Comandements, then in the second place he is to go through these Comandements one by one, and in each of them to consider what sinnes are thus condem-

ned,

ned, and what duties are there enioyned, and here-
vpon still to question with his owne heart, *And*
haue I committed this sinne? or, *Haue I neglected*
that dutie? or, *If I haue kept the precept, for the*
matter, yet haue I not broken it in the maner of per-
formance, or in the intention of my minde? And
thus wee may proceed, when wee beginne with
Gods Law.

But if we begin first with our selues, then wee
may hold this course: first, (after some compe-
rent knowledge of the Law, which is euery pre-
supposed in this worke,) we must take a view of
our life, or of so much of it, as then we are occa-
sioned and purposed to examine, and consider
from time to time, and from one moment to ano-
ther, how we haue bene busied, in what sort we
behaued our selues in it, and what haue bene our
deedes, words, and thoughts, that deserue scan-
ning: and hereupon still to question with our
selues, vpon euery worke that admitteth such a
question, what therein hath bene done amisse,
or how we haue transgressed in the matter, or in
the maner, or in the end, or in any circumstance.
In which kinde, that we may proceede the more
orderly, and vnderstand our selues and our estate
the more distinctly, we must not passe ouer things
in the grosse, and lap vp too much of our life in a
generall and indistinct consideration, but rather
labour to part and diuide our time by smaller par-
cels, that so we may see euery thing apart and by
it selfe. For which purpose, those who haue not
better directions already, may be pleased to make
vse of these.

If we be to take a generall account of our whole life, and to examine our selues from our beginning to the present time; wee may deuide our life seuerall wayes. As first, by the times of our age, how we were busied, and in what maner we carried our selues towards God, when wee were boyes, and when afterward we were young men, and when men of middle age; and so on to our present time. Secondly, we may diuide our life by the seuerall callings and conditions of life, in which we have spent our time: as what wee did when we were scholars at the Grammar schoole; what, when we were seruants, or Apprentices, or vnder Tutors and Gardians; what, when wee became free-men, or householders, on at our own liberty and disposing; and what in the exercising of our particular trade or profession or course of life; as Clergie men in their exercise of the Ministry, Magistrates in their places of government, Merchants in their trafficking, Craftsmen in their occupations, and every man in that vocation whereunto hee is called, and in that profession which he doth exercise and bestowe his life in. Thirdly, we may againe part and (as it were) subdiuide the time of our speciall Calling, by the speciall businesses which we have gone thorow, while we have liued in it; as a Merchant may consider of his dealing, how iust or vniust it hath beene in the commodities which he hath carried forth into the Indies, into the Easterne Countries, and into other Kingdomes abroad; and how he behaued himself in fetching this or that commodity from

from such and such parts, and in venting his wares abroad after they were come home; &c. And so may other men doe in the like cases; concerning the principall businesses and occasions, that occurre or happen in their severall professions or callings.

2. If we be to consider of some lesser portion of our life, (as religious men have beene accustomed to doe, by considering that time which hath passed them since their last either ordinary or more solemne examination,) then wee may part our moneths by weekes, and our weekes by daies, and each day by his severall houres; that our taske for the present being the lesse, our care and labour about each particular may be the greater. These directions for the manner of proceeding, I have represented to such as shall vouchsafe to reade this schedule; leaving them notwithstanding to their owne choise, which of these wayes they will follow, or whether they will follow any of them at all. For those who are accustomed to these asceticall exercises of deuotion, may perhaps devise other more fitting courses or wayes of proceeding then these are: and it is reason, yea and a point of wisdom too; for every man to make vse of those rules, which in his owne experience he findeth most proper to his own nature, and most powerfull for his reformation and amendment. I will only add thus much more for the last clause of this point; that the more kinde and wayes of proceeding that every man useth, the more knowledge he will gaine of himselfe, and

and the more will he bee enabled to resist sinne, and to reforme his life and behauiour: for that which escapeth him in one maner and course of proceeding, may meete him in another, and what one course leaueth vnperfect, that the next may supply.

CHAP. V.

Of the times of Examination, in which it is to be exercised.



He next thing to be considered, is, what may be the fittest times for this exercise. And the times to be considered are two. When and how often it is to be vsed. For answer whereto, the Scriptures, for ought that I know or can obserue, haue determined no set or precise time, which is necessary alwayes to be obserued in the performance of this worke. Notwithstanding some rules there are, partly pointed at in the Scripture, and partly prescribed by holy men, which wee may make vse of for our good. And they, so farre as I can gather and obserue, be these and such like.

There is no danger of sursetting vpon too much, nor need we feare lest we do perform it too often. For first, the oftener we reckon with our soules, the fewer new things wee shall haue at e- uery

very time to reckon for; and the fewer the things be, the more readily will they be called to mind, and they may bee scanned the more exactly: whereas multitude of things, if they come together, will hide one another, and take time one from another, and hinder the notice each of other; and still it may be expected, that where many businessses are tumbled in together, some will escape away in the throng. And secondly, the oftener we take account, the fresher will our deedes and actions bee in remembrance; because being lately done, they have not had space to slip out of our mindes. And therefore the oftener the better: nor can there lightly bee any danger in being too diligent. The consideration where-

of made Sr. Bernard say of this worke, *a Si semper hoc quantum opus est, facis, semper facis*; If ye wil doe this as often as there is neede of it, you must doe it alwaies. And it may bee thought, that in respect heereof, the Prophet, speaking of this worke, did double his words, *b Let vs (saith hee) search and try our waies*: implying, that as hee doth double his words, so we should double the worke, and after we haue done it once, do it yet over againe.

2. The time that learned and deuout men haue been accustomed to obserue, and doe thinke most conuenient for an ordinarie practice of this dutie is, that once every day at least, every man should consider of all such things as haue passed since his last reckoning. So saith S. Chrysostom, *c Hoc fiat singulis diebus*; Let this account be kept euerie day: and That which shon doest in a matter of

G

G

money,

(a) Bern. in Cantic. Serm. 58. in fine.

pag. 742.

(b) Lam. 3. 40.

(c) Hoc fiat singulis diebus: Et quod facis in pecunia, nos facis ut duo dies prae-teream, quin cum famulo rationem meam, ne confusi-

onem inducat obliuio. Etenim 2.

Cor. 13. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

Chrysost. Exp. in psal. 4. pag.

27. A.

and the more will he bee enabled to resist sinne, and to reforme his life and behauiour: for that which escapeth him in one maner and course of proceeding, may meete him in another, and what one course leaueth vnperfect, that the next may supply.

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(b) Lam. 3. 40.

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om 75. de 12.

or meli 28.

lyris lex supar.

Chrysost. Exp.

in psal. 4. pag.

27. A.

(a) Psal. 51. 3.

(b) Virtutum
suarum obliu,
peccata sola me-

moria retinebant
non, ut huius te-

pestatis homines,
qui peccatorum

suarum memori-

am exant, Chr.

hom. i. in psal.
50. pag. 1003.

D.

(c) Apud codice
domi habet, in

quo quotidianas
rationes scribas?

Habe item co-

llectionem in consien-

cia, et quotidiana
peccata scribe.

Chrysost.

ibid. p. 1004. D.

want, which is, that thou sufferest not two daies to o-
uerpasse thee without reckoning with thy seruants, lest
forgetfulness should breede confusion in the reckoning;
doe the same also in matters of thy soule, and actions
of thy life, euerie day. And the same Father, prea-
ching vpon that Text, *a My sinne is euer before me,*
noteth, that the Saints in old time were used to for-
get their vertues, and remember their sinnes; not as
men now a daies (saith he) doe vse to doe, who put
their sinnes out of their remembrance. And heere-
upon he aduisech vs not long after, in the same
Sermon; *c Hast thou not a Booke in thine house,*
(saith he) wherein thou writest thy daily accounts? *d*
Haue also a like booke in thy conscience, and write
therein thy daily transgressions, I meane, (saith he)
when thou layest thee downe vpon thy bed, — bring
forth thy booke, and take an account of thy sinnes.
And to like purpose speake many others, as may
further be scene in the next rule following.
The time which learned and wise men haue
allotted for this worke, is especially in the euen-
ing, or at night: because that time is a time of
vacation and leisure. For in the day time wee
haue our trades to follow, and our markets to
make, and our Law-suites to attend on, and our
friends to talke with, and our families to provide
for; and one businesse or other will euer be com-
ming in the way, and interrupt vs: but the night
is a time of priuateness and retirednesse, when oc-
casions of the world being ouerpasse, we haue
the more freedome to conferre with our soules.
To this purpose it is, that *David* tooke the night
time

time to meditate in; *I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy Law. And that time he tooke to lament his sinnes; I make my bed to swimme, and water my couch with my teares. And that time he tooke also to examine his soule in; I call to remembrance my song in the night; I commune with mine own heart. &c.* And that time he biddeth vs also take for the like purpose; *Commune with your owne heart upon your bed, and be still. Vpon which words of the Prophet, we haue this note given vs by St. Chrysostom: What meaneth this (saith hee) that he saith, Commune with your hearts upon your bedes? &c. And he answereth, It is this; After supper time, when ye are going to sleepe, and are ready to lye downe on bed, and haue great quietnesse and silence, without the presence or disturbance of any, then erect a Tribunal for the conscience. And a little after; When neither friend doth disturbe thee, nor seruants prouoke thee, nor multitude of busineses doth presse thee, then take account of thy life, what thou hast done in the day time before. And the same Father in another place, When thou laiest thee downe upon thy bed, and no man is by to disturbe thee, before sleepe come on, bring forth the booke of thy conscience, and recount thy sinnes with thy selfe, saying to thy selfe, HAVE I THIS DAY OFFENDED IN WORD OR DEED? He addeth; In the day thou hast not time for this worke, but feare of Superiors, & con-
(a) Psal. 119. 55.
(b) Psal. 6. 6.
(c) Psal. 77. 6.
(d) Psal. 4. 4.
(e) Post eorum inquit, quando ille dormit, quando estis decubitu, et nullo profecto, multa, quies et silentium, et non interu-
turbante profun-
da tranquillitas,
excita iudicium
conscientie. --
Quando nequa-
morum intertur-
bat, nec famulus
irritat, nec turba
negotiorum urge-
tunc vix inter-
din, alle ratione
exigite. Chryso-
stomus in Psal.
4. 4. pag. 106. C.
D.
(f) Quis in lecto
suo iacet, nec
quisquam est, qui
tibi negotium fa-
cessat, aut quid
suum inuocat,
libellum in mediis
produit, et peccata
tua totum repu-
ta, dicam opus
teipsum, Num
quid hodie ad
die, vel scimo-
ne vel opere peccauit? Chrysost. Hom. 2. in Psal. 10. pag. 1004, 1005. (g) Di-
urno tempore in faciendo spaciū non habet, verum et Professorum metus, et solatium colloquii,
et negotiorum cura, et alacritas proli studium, et viciis procuratio, et paranda mensa sollicitudo,
et iuxta omnia ista negotia. &c. Idem ibid. pag. 1005.*

rea et seipsum a
præteritis nostris,
præteritis rationibus
ad fratres de

ference with friends, and care of businesses, and forecasting for education of children, and provision for wife, and preparation for diet, and a thousand things beside doe distract thee. And to like purpose S. Basil, ^a When the day (saith he) is ended, and businesses are past, before rest or sleepe, it is expedient that every mans conscience should be iudged of his owne heart. &c. And Dorotheus saith, ^b that it was a rule from their forefathers, how men ought to cleanse themselves, that in the evening they should question themselves, how they had passed the day, and againe in the morning, how they had passed the night. And Bernard, ^c Let iustice sit and iudge, let the conscience stand impleaded and accusing it selfe. No man loueth thee more, nor no man will iudge thee better. In the morning exact an account of the night past, and impose vpon thy selfe watchfulnesse for the day to come. In the evening require a reckoning of the day past, and lay an intunction for the night coming. And in like manner speake other spirituall Masters, who vndertake to prescribe rules of a religious life: whereby it may be seene, how they doe generally agree vpon it, as a receiued Principle, that euery night men should take accounts and examine themselves for the day past: but in the two last authorities we may further note, that besides the accounting at night for the day past, they require also a reckoning each morning for the former night. And surely that is not to no purpose: for

accusans conscientia. Nemo te plus diligit; nemo te fidelius indicabit. Mane fac a teipso exactionem, et vana dies tu tibi indicito cautionem. Vespere diei nem exage, et superuenientis noctis fac indicationem. Bernard. de vita solitaria. Monte Dei, pag. 1029. D.

СЧЕТ

even in the night reserved for rest, there do many times passe thoughts, affections, purposes, yea and some actions also, which as they doe well deserue censure, so may easily be forgotten, if they be deferred till multitude of businesses the day following haue bred a confusion in the memorie.

4. It is a very fit time for this worke, when we haue beene about some important businessse, in which there may bee occasion either of doing good, or of offending in some speciall manner. Thus *Iob*, when his sonnes had beene feasting, because great cheere and much merriment are most times occasions of some sinne; therefore at their returne home, he called them together, and sanctified them, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For *Iob* said, *It may be my sonnes haue sinned, and cursed God in their heart. Thus did Iob continually.* And thus Christians should doe, when they returne from making purchases, or striking of bargaines, or following of Law-suites, or feasting with their friends, or debating of controuersies, or any other the like workes and imployments of moment, they should call together their thoughts, and examine their hearts concerning all the former passages, and sanctifie their soules by lamenting their sinne, and purposing a better life.

5. It is a fit time also to examine our consciences, when we haue some speciall occasion to prepare our selues for God, or to intreate his fauour in some speciall sort. Thus the Church of *Israel*, when thy were in distresse, and sighed to God for

Lam. 3. 40.

1 Cor. 11. 28.

reliefe, they encourage each other, *Let vs search and try our wayes, and turne againe to the Lord.* And S. Paul, when the Lords Supper was to be administered, because it was a matter of great weight, and might breede much harme to the vnworthy Receiver, therefore prescribeth this rule of preparation to all that mind to partake of that Sacrament, *Let a man examine himselfe: and so let him take of this bread, and drinke of this cup.* And so in like manner, if we be in any distresse or danger by reason of our sinnes, that is a fit time to examine our selues, that by serious repentance wee may goe to begge pardon. And if wee bee to receiue the blessed Supper of our Lord, then wee should examine also, lest being vnprepared for so holy a worke, we proue vnworthy partakers of Christs body. And if we keepe a fasting day, for the humiliation of our soules, that is a fit time; that by taking a view of our sinnes, we may bee the more affected with sorrow. And if we keepe a Sabbath day, or some great day of festiuitie vnto the Lord, that also is a fit time; that our soules hauing by examination beene purged from our sinnes, wee may bee prepared to heare and pray and praise God with attention and zeale. But especially if we be cast vpon our sicke beds, in danger of death, and in expectation of our dissolution, then is a most vrgent time to take accounts of our soules, that our reckonings may be made euen before we be called to account at Gods Tribunall seat. For *as the tree falleth, so it lyeth:* and if we dye vnprepared, we shall be vnable to answer him who is
the

the Iudge of quicke and dead. In these therefore, and all other cases of like moment and consequence, there is great cause to vse this worke.

Lastly, besides those daily and casuall times, it is a conuenient time also, after some good space passed in this manner, to examine our selues ouer againe; as for example, after a moneth or after a yeere to consider our selues for the moneth or yeere last passed, that thereby we may see, how wee haue profited, or how wee haue decayed for that space of time. For as our members grow, and our shape every day changerth, and our blacke haire turne gray, while wee perceiue it not, nor can tell when and how these changes come; yet after some space of time we may easily discern, that so we are changed: so it is in the state of our soules; besides the manifest changes of it, which doe appeare while they are in doing, there are certaine insensible alterations, which are not to be discerned, but after some continuance of time. And for the rectifying of these, it is necessary to take a more generall view of our soules, then in euery daies examination we can doe, that wee may see wherein we are better or worse, or how our zeale is increased or decayed, ouer that which it was a moneth, or halfe a yeere, or a yeere, or longer time before. For by this meanes we shall not only see our grosser and more apparent faults, but euen our decay of seruor and religion, which creeperth vpon vs vnawares, and so learne to blow the coales of zeale, and to stirre vp the grace of God that is in vs, that we may strengthen the

(a) Sicut non
sentimus quo mo-
do crescunt mem-
bra, proficit cor-
pus, mutatur spe-
cies, nigredo ca-
pillorum albescit
in canis; Hec
quippe omnia,
nobis nescitis,
aguntur in nobis:
ita mens nostra
per momenta vi-
uendi ipso curam
usu a semetipsa
permutatur. &c.
Greg. Moral.
lib. 25. cap. 6.

no animam
bona est
et in bono
et in malo
et in medio
et in fine

(b) Apoc. 3. 2

things

things which remayne, and are ready to dye. For which purpose the Ancients haue beene accustomed to vse the time of Lent, as I haue shewed in an other place more fully.

(a) Treatise of
Fasting, chap.
30. pag. 129, &
131.

CHAP. VI.

Of the benefits of this worke, or what good vse it may serue a Christian for.



AVING hitherto in some measure declared the nature of Examination, with the adjuncts appertaining thereto, I come now in the last place to consider the benefits that we may reape by it: the consideration whereof may animate vs to *abound in this worke of the Lord*, when we shall know that our labour is not in vaine in the Lord. And for that purpose I haue gathered and obserued these vses following.

Examination
is a good
meanes for
Repentance.
1. Reason.

I. It will be a good meanes to fit and leade vs to *repentance* and amendment: and that in two respects.

1. Because it will serue to *discover* vnto vs our finnes, and make vs see our wretched and miserable condition. For we (such is our frailty and corruption) doe daily, yea hourly commit many finnes, which through heedlesnes or vnskilfulness, or strength of passion, or because wee are intent vpon some other businesse which then taketh

keth vp all our thoughts; wee obserue not, nor
discerne not for the present. But businesse ended,
and the occasions and tentations passed,
when we are more free both from distraction and
passion; if then wee take a time to bechinke our
selues, and to recall all that is past, then our
thoughts will be our owne, and we shall in cold
blood be able to see many things, which before
went vnspied. Then, for example, we shall bee
“able to tell our owne soules, Such a time I met
“with a bon-companion, and over-shot my selfe
“with excesse of drinke; and such a time I met with
“a wanton Minion, who inuicigled mee with her
“lookes, and I was ensnared with her loue;
“and such a time I met with a crosse-neighbour,
“and my heart did rise against him at the very sight
“of him; and at such a time I met with some mer-
“ry mates, and in our idle chat I disgraced my
“neighbour behinde his backe; and such a time,
“when I was in praying to my God, my heart was
“wandring about the vanities of the world, or my
“selfe fell asleepe while God was admonishing me
“of things belonging to my soule; and many times
“in one day I haue sinned against God by vnjust
“dealing with my neighbour. One I deceived by
“a lye, and another by vnsound commodities, and
“a third by counterfeit and base money; and a
“fourth by faire promises and protestations which
“I neuer meant to performe. And an hundred
other such finnes as these, wee might discover in
our selues within a short time, if wee did take ac-
count of our selues at convenient times. And if

our finnes were once in this sort set before our face, they would make vs tremble for feare, and blush for shame, and giue no rest to our heads, nor slumber to our eyes, till by sorrow and repentance, we had made our peace with our God.

2. Reason.

1. Examination rightly performed, will bee a meanes to leade vs to repentance, because it will shew vs with what patience and long-suffering God hath borne with vs, and in what desperate case our soules stood, but that God in mercy spared vs beyond our deservings. For it will appeare, that he might haue stricken vs dead many a time, while we were prouoking him by our sins. For example, while we were drunke, and could not speake a ready word; or while we were satisfying our vncleane lusts in the Harlots bed; or while we were abusing Gods name by prophane oathes and execrations; or while we were taking a bribe to peruert Iustice; or while wee were telling a lye to yndermine our neighbours; then and at such an instant God might haue cut vs off, and haue drawne vs to the Iudgement with a harlot in our armes, or a blasphemous oath in our mouthes, or a bribe of oppression in our hands, or a murderous and malicious thought in our hearts; and if then God had taken vs away, as he took away *Elish* in his drunkenesse, and *Isaiah* in his prophaneesse, and *Herod* in his haughtinesse, and *Zimri* and *Cozbi* in their vncleaneesse. &c. Lord, what might haue become of my poore soule? Or, what could I haue expected, but to haue dyed in sinne without repentance,

(a) 1 King. 16. 9

(b) Dan. 5. 2, 3,
&c. with ver.

30.

(c) Aa. 12. 21,
22, 23.

(d) Num. 25. 6,
7, 8.

rance, and to haue liued ever after in torment without hope? But he hath spared me, and it is his mercy, thus by his patience to bring me to repentance, that I might be saued. Now what Christian heart would not tremble to thinke what great danger he hath escaped, and would not melt into teares to remeber what great merrey he hath receiued? And what soule would not be moued hereby to hasten his repentance, either that hee might prevent all such danger heereafter to himselfe, or that he might shew a thankfull heart to God, that hath spared him in such manner?

And in this sort will Examination leade vs to repentance and amendment, if we vse it diligently and in due order. And that is the first vse for which this worke doth serue.

II. Secondly, it will be a good meanes to prevent future finnes; and that in two respects also.

I. Because the finding out of our former errors, and the finnes that be past, will lay before our eyes our speciall infirmities, and will make vs see both the corruptions that cleaue closest vnto vs, and the tentacions that ofteneft preuaile with vs. For if the accounts bee diligently made, one will finde, that hee is sooneft overcome with pride; and another, that he is ofteneft taken with lust; and another with vaine-glory; and another with reuengefull thoughts; and euery one with somewhat, to which hee is inclined by nature or custome, or to which hee is allured by ill company and daily tentacions, or to which he is forced by threatnings or feare of offending. And when

Examination
a meanes to
prevent sinne.
I. Reason.

once we see how we were mis-led, and what it was that deceived or overcame vs; we shall hereby learne how to discover the danger, and how to arme our selues against the assault, and how to handle our weapons when occasion shall require: & every former error will make vs more wise and more warie against the next onset. For as among men, hee that findeth himselfe to haue bene deceived with faire words, will neuer trust that party any more; and as hee that hath bene coozened by counterfeited wares, will learne by that error to iudge better of the like commodities for afterward: so in the case of our soules, a wise Christian, by every errour that he hath committed and discovered, will learne more wisdom to prevent the like danger.

2. Reason

Examination
to
the
soul
is
like
a
mirror
in
which
the
soul
may
see
its
own
state
and
the
state
of
its
neighbour.

Examination will be a meanes to prevent sinne, because having humbled vs with sorrow, it will make vs afraid of the like sinne, and resolute to stand out against all tentations. For we vsually say, that the child that hath bene once burned in the flame, will feare to come neere the fire any more: and so when by discussing our conscience, wee have learned to condemne our selues, as unworthy of any mercy: the smart of that which is past will make vs afraid to come neere the like danger for ever after. Now will any man be so prone to offend, if hee knoweth that once within a while hee must come to some reflexion, and be censured by the iust sentence of his owne conscience. So St. Chrysostom, *The soules* (saith hee) being afraid of the sentence aboue

(a) Anima be-
florant verita-
iudicium, ne ex-
dem rursus subeat
sententiam, et
torqueatur et fla-
gellatur, reddetur
ad peccatum tar-
dior. Chrysost.
in Psal. 4. pag.
37. C.

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c H

passed

passed on him the day before, will bee more slow to offend, lest he doe againe incurr the same schisme, and be lashed and beaten as before he was. And S.

Ambrose, *While we bewaile sinnes past, we exclude sinnes to come: and the censuring of our euill doings, is a disciplining of vs to innocencie of life.* And Seneca, bending himselfe against the vice of immoderate anger, for the moderating or rather abolishing of it, thinketh this worke of Examination, in which we passe censure vpon our selues, will be most effectuall. For, *Anger* (saith he) *will cease, and become more coole, when it knoweth it must come every day before a Iudge that wil not spare it.* But surely, no man will either shame himselfe every day before God and his owne conscience, nor iudge and condemne himselfe for his misdoings, yalesse he both meane to amend them, and finde some sweetnasse and consolation in the practice of this vngratefull worke: in regard whereof, I may truly say, (and thus shall be the use of this point) Either *examining* will make a man *lesse his sinning*, or *sinning* will make him *leave off examining*.

I. I. Thirdly, the due performance of this worke, will make vs more indifferent and more equall in iudging of our neighbours and brethren: For if a man doe not sift his soule, and discover his owne corrupt and false good and wicked Brethren in mans nature ever since Adams fall, will make him re-ouer-ueue himselfe, and undervalue others. And this is the chiefe reason why men be so fauourable in their owne causes, and so per-

(a) Dum dolemus admissa, admittenda excludimus; et fit quidam de condemnatione culpe disciplina innocentie. Rostriol. rom. 4. de P. 8. nicol. 2. cap. 10. pag. 473.

(b) Desinit irasci et non moderari, quia scit se quotidie iudicari cum esset optimus. Seneca de ira, lib. 3. cap. 26. p. 189.

Examination maketh vs indifferent Iudges betweene others and our selues.

empty in other mens. But if men by sifting their
soules, haue discovered their finnes, the sense of
their owne wants, will make them more pittifull
towards others: as *St. Paul* implyeth, when hee
exhorteth men to meekenes towards other men

(a) *Tit. 3. 2. 3.* from this consideration, because *themselves were*
sometimes unwise, disobedient, &c. And from this,

(b) *Gal. 6. 1.* *Left themselves also be tempted.* And where *St.*

(c) *Tim. 1. 15.* *Paul* saith of himselfe, *that hee was chiefe of sin-*

(d) *Neg. hoc di-* *ners, S. Bernard* potech, *that he spake this not false-*

cebat Paulus me- *ly, out of rashnesse and temerity, but feelingly, and out*

diendi precipitati- *of the sense and esteeme that hee had of his finnes.*

que, sed estiman- *For he that by examining himselfe, doth thoroughly*

di affectione. Qui *understand himselfe, thinketh no mans sinne to be*

omni perfecte ex- *equall to his owne; which hee knoweth not so well as*

aminando seipsum *his owne.* And therefore, if men would careful-

intelligit, suo pec- *ly performe this worke in examining themselves,*

cata nullius pec- *they would not rashly condemne others without*

cataque par esse *cause.*

existimas, quod *III. This daily reckoning with our selues,*

non sicut suum in- *will be a meanes to strengthen vs against despaire,*

telligit. Bern. *and to comfort vs in a time of temptation and feare.*

de vita solitar. *For if the Deuill shall present our finnes before*

ad fratres de *our face, and aggravate them, that he may driue*

Monte Dei. *vs to despaire; then our former practice of this*

pag. 1020. I. *dutie will be a help to support vs two waies.*

Examinatio *I. Because by often reckoning with our soules,*

comfoteth a- *we haue gotten the true knowledge of our states;*

gainst de- *we haue found out our sins; both which they be,*

spaire. *and of what quality they are: and therefore wee*

shall not so easily be deceived by Satan, if hee

presse them beyond their pitch, and aggravate

cuplor

ε H

them

them beyond their condition, as in times of distresse he v'sually doth.

2. Because by this daily reckoning and iudging of our selues, we haue made all even between God and our soules. For hauing confessed our finnes, and censured our selues, and fled to God for forgiveness, we haue his promise of remission and pardon. And then whatsoever our finnes be, (as certainly they are both the sower and the lesser for the performance of this worke) but whatsoever they be) we know they cannot hurt vs, because God hath forgiven them. And these things will be vnto vs matter of great comfort in a time of conflict and distresse, at which time a little peace of conscience will be worth all the world. For wheremen that haue liued securely, without casting vp of their accounts, are in times of temptation oftenwhelmed with horror, being neither able to giue comfort to themselves, nor to receiue it from others: hee that hath vsed a daily reckoning with his soule, will bee moued at the sight of his finnes, rather to blesse God for his mercy, because he hath pardoned them, than to despaire of his mercy, for feare that he will not pardon them.

V. Fifthly and lastly, our iudging of our selues in this sort, will be a meanes to prevent Gods heauier *Iudgement* afterward. For God will haue our finnes to be discovered one way or other, and will haue vs to be conuicted and iudged for them: and if our selues doe, & bolte them out, and produce them, he will couer them; and if we accuse and condemne

Examination
is a meanes to
prevent Gods
Iudgement.

(a) *Prou. 28. 13.*
Psal. 32. 5.
1 Cor. 11. 32.
1 Ioh. 1. 9.

condemne ourselves, he will absolve and requite vs; and if wee punish our offences, he will forgive them. Whereupon *St. Chrysostom* conclu-

(a) *Letium autem quietem petitorum, hoc iudicium in eis: idem enim ad hanc rem hoc se posuit, &c.*

Id si quotidie diligenter facies, terribili futuri Iudicis Tribunalis laus assistes. Chrysost. Hom. 43.

in Matth. pag. 398. B.

(b) *Zeph. i. 12.*

(c) *Psalm. 50. 21.*

(d) *Eccles. 12. ult.*

deeth, that if a man doe diligently every day performe this worke of examination, he may stand with confidence before the dreadfull Barre of the great Iudge. But if we neglect this dutie, or stubber it out without care, he will take it into his own hands, and will performe it to the purpose: hee will search *Ierusalem* with candles, and hee will reprove the wretchedly, and sit his throne in order before his eyes: and hee will bring every worke into judgement, whether it bee good or euill: and nothing shall goe for naught, that hath beene done against his Law. For, *I am humane punisher, and doe iudicate perfectly*; they must bee punished either by our owne censure, or by the sentence of God, who is the great Iudge of all the world. And in this sort, our reckoning with our selues will prevent Gods iudging of vs at the last day.

These and such like be the benefits which wee may reape by this exercise.

Out of the consideration of all which, I thinke I may iustly apply to this worke of Examination, that which *Moses* spake of Gods Word deliue-
red to the Israelites; *It is no vaine thing concerning vs; because it is our life; and through this thing wee may prolong our daies*, in a blessed and happy state for evermore. And this bare consideration is argument enough, both to commend the necessity of the worke, and to command our diligence and care for the practice of it. But yet

to

(e) *Deut. 32. 47.*

It is no vaine thing concerning vs; because it is our life; and through this thing wee may prolong our daies

in Matth. pag. 398. B.

to set a little more edge vpon our affections, we may hence deduce three considerations, applicable to our practice and state of life.

I. Wee may hereeby see what the cause is, why most of vs, notwithstanding our hearing and reading and praying and communicating, yet do rather *decay* than *thrive* in grace. For though I will not deny, but this defect may be ascribed to some other causes also; yet seeing Examination is so vsfull for repentance, and so powerfull for amendment and reformation, the neglect of this must needs breed a great defect of grace: even as the absence of the sunne, which is the fountaine of heate, maketh way for frost and snow in the world. Nor is it any marvell that negligence in accounting produceth such decay in our soules; for euen the like negligence in taking of accounts in our Trades, doth breede an euident decay in our worldly estates. For if wee should passe dayes and weekes and moneths, without accounting our receipts and expenses, every cunning Chapman abroad would over-reach vs, & every false seruant at home might rob vs, while we thought on no harme, nor perceiued how or wherein wee were wronged. Now there is no chapman so craftie to deceiue, as the Deuill is; nor any seruant so false to his master, as our owne hearts are to vs: and therefore if wee passe daies and weekes and moneths, yea and yeeres too, without examining our consciences, and calling our hearts to account, as most of vs doe; it is no maruell if wee decay in goodnesse every day, till at length we proue Banckrupts: nay rather it were a wonder if we should long subsist, without being vt-

terly vndone. Cease then to maruell that there is so little conscience in the world, so long as wee know that there is no more *examining* of the conscience among men.

2. We may obserue heere a reason, why God doth many times lay *crosses* vpon vs; and though we pray and fast and call for mercy, yet finde not that ease nor that deliuerance which we expect. For if Examination be so effectuell for remoning of GODS Iudgements, as hath beene shewne; then certainly if Gods anger doe continue vpon vs, and his hand be stretched out still; it is an euident signe, that wee haue not iudged our selues, nor erected a Tribunall for the conscience within vs, as in duty and in wisdom wee should haue done. Thus the Prophet threateneth the Iewes with Iudgements, because *no* *man repented him of his wickednesse, saying What haue I done?* implying, that as pardon cannot be expected without repentance, so repentance cannot be hoped for without examination and questioning with our soules. And therefore we need not maruell that Gods Iudgements are continued vpon vs, seeing we neuer take care to passe iudgement vpon our selues.

3. We may hereby see, how it commeth to passe that many men haue grosse and conspicuous faults, which themselves discern not, though euery child abroad can point at them and display them. For if Examination be so good a meanes to represent our sinnes, as in a glasse, vnto vs; then they which see not their open sinnes, are not accustomed to make vse of this meanes. And therefore, as when we see a man come abroad with some notable deformity about

bout his face, we may conelude that that man hath not lately looked himselfe in his glasse: so if we see a man blinde in iudging of his owne sinnes, which are to others as conspicuous as the spots in a mans face, we may build vpon it, that man doth not vie to looke himselfe in the glasse of his conscience, and by Examination to take a view what his deformities are.

4. Wee may hence gather matter of *encouragement*, to breake thorow all difficulties, and to shake off our wonted drowfinesse, that we may with alacritie and perseuerance go thorow with this worke. For if Examination be so necessary for repentance & reformation: and so effectually to breede vs comfort in our greatest agonie, & to avert Gods Iudgements for our sinnes: then euery wise man will conelude, that this is a worke as necessary as his daily foode. For say that a man cared not for grace and amendment, (which were a most desperate and gracelesse resolution, yet say a man cared not for these:) is there any man liuing, that would not bee glad of some comfort when he lyeth a dying, or would not labour to be freed from the plagues that God powreth vpon vnrepentant sinners? Let vs then but seriously minde these gracious effects of a strict accounting with our soules, and I hope we shall not proue so gracelesse, as to refuse our own mercy, and wilfully to cast away those precious soules, which Christ hath purchased at so deere a rate. I beseech then euery Christian, that either desireth heauen, or feareth hell, that if hee haue beene negligent in this dutie heeretofore, he now at length begin a due and serious

ous performance of it; and euen double his future care, that he may redeeme his former negligence: remembring withall, if still he goe on notwithstanding all admonitions, that *Sextius* and *Seneca* and *Plato* and *Pythagoras*, heathen men, that were woont to examine themselues every day, will rise vp in iudgement against slothfull Christians, that passe on day by day, without euer taking account of their doings. Yea we may consider further, that euen our selues shall rise vp against our selues at the last Iudgement; and by our care for our states in the world, condemne our carelesenes for the states of our soules. For if we know it to be so needfull for our worldly states, to keepe an account of our expenses and receipts; what excuse can we haue for our selues, that we haue for many dayes and weekes, neuer taken any account of our liues and consciences? Methinketh, euery such thought should pierce the heart of any Christian: and therefore haue I touched them, that we may be at last inwardly touched with a feeling of our owne want; and desire of God that he will open our eyes, that we may see what is behoofefull for vs; and enflame our hearts, that wee may follow after it.

FINIS.



